

# STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

## 24 AUGUST 2009

*Present :-* Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)  
Councillors Nick Barlow, Mike Hogg,  
Jackie Maclean, Gaye Pyman, Laura Sykes,  
Nick Taylor, Dennis Willetts and Julie Young

*Substitute Members :-* Councillor Helen Chuah for Councillor Mark Cory  
Councillor Dave Harris for Councillor Kim Naish

### 12. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minute of the meeting held on 14 July 2009 was confirmed as a correct record.

### 13. Review of the Colchester2020 Partnership

Due to the absence of Dr Paul Zollinger-Read, Chairman of Colcheser2020 and Chief Executive of North East Essex Primary Care Trust, who due to sickness sent his apologies, the panel agreed to defer this item and to review the Colchester2020 Partnership at the next convenient meeting (rescheduled after the meeting for Tuesday 29 September 2009).

### 14. Life Opportunities

Ms. Bridget Tighe, Community Development Co-coordinator attended the meeting for this item and presented the report on Progress towards Colchester's Life Opportunities targets.

In response to Councillor Arnold's question regarding the Council's role in meeting the Worklessness target Ms. Tighe commented that community projects officers could arrange for local community venues to host sessions where several agencies were brought together to meet target group (lone parents). This was more successful than asking lone parents to attend sessions at the job Centre. Therefore, the Council's intervention meant bringing the service to the target group.

Councillor Taylor said there remained a difficulty with the current reporting format to determine the Council's intervention in respect of multi-agency targets, requesting that in any future reports, where possible, the narrative should show how the Council's intervention had created a result or positive progress, to help members see where the Council's efforts had made a difference.

Councillor Taylor also asked that in future, and for example the performance on 'Crime', the inclusion of comparative historic data showing trends and improvements would help members determine progress.

In respect of 'education', Ms. Tighe said officers are currently working with local schools to determine ways of encouraging improved school attendance.

In response to a concern from Councillor Hogg regarding eviction rates, Ms. Tighe acknowledged that the housing target to reduce eviction rates for last year had not been met., but a new target had been introduced for 2009-10. With regard to younger tenants' issues (the 16 - 25 age groups), YES (Youth Employment Services) are working to support young people to manage their money, and evidence from them suggested that the target had not been reached due to the high volume of cases and because the time needed for each individual case has been underestimated. Ms. Tighe agreed to provide the new target to the panel.

In reference to the housing target for reducing the number of evictions, Councillor Young asked for this target to be subject to further review, given that people caught in these situations were expressing a desire, due to the likelihood of a better outcome, to having their case resolved in court.

In response to Councillor Arnold, Ms. Tighe said the data on teenage conceptions was only provided by the Department of Health after two years, due to sensitivity and confidentiality. It was confirmed that the Council does not directly run any projects directly but signposts and promotes NHS services when they are attending community events or meetings.

Councillor Arnold suggested that the panel could consider a more detailed piece of work during 2010-11 that would address the issues raised during these discussions.

Councillor Dopson, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Partnerships suggested the panel should consider joint scrutiny, inviting representatives from partner agencies, in the cases of shared targets.

Ms. Wain, Executive Director, explained that the panel would receive a Local Area Agreement report at the September meeting, and that this would be the opportune time to consider what the panel would wish to see in more detail in future reporting.

*RESOLVED* that the panel:

- i) Commented on, and noted the work of the Public Service Partnership towards achieving the local 'Life Opportunities' targets.

- ii) Requested details of the new targets on addressing vulnerable people in the 16 – 25 year old age group.
- iii) Requested details on the ‘childhood obesity’ statistics.

## **15. A new build nuclear power station at Bradwell**

*RESOLVED* that the panel;

- i) Considered and noted the progress made in relation to the Cabinet recommendations.
- ii) Agreed to the continual work of the task and finish group in relation to outstanding issues.
- iii) Agreed that Group Spokespersons on the task and finish group would consider a way forward to determining further research on the impact of the chlorination process, with the possibility of lobbying for a commissioned study.

## **16. Work Programme**

*RESOLVED* that the panel;

- i) Considered and noted the 2009-10 Work Programme.
- ii) Noted an additional piece of work to come to the panel at the next meeting, on what the Council is doing in readiness for the full impact of the recession, with an invitation going to the appropriate portfolio holder to attend.